



# Congressional Record

**Mr. Bishop (GA)** – Madame Speaker, I rise today to honor a man who has greatly improved the medical community of Georgia, Joel Wernick.

For over twenty years, Mr. Wernick has served as President and CEO of Phoebe Putney Health System in Albany, Georgia. Through his stewardship, Phoebe Putney has thrived. The number of physicians has doubled. The facility has grown by several million square feet, and state-of-the-art technologies are now available to the patients.

Phoebe Putney Health System is the region's largest employer, and is comprised of Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital, a 450-bed tertiary care teaching hospital and Phoebe Worth Medical Center, a critical access rural hospital. Phoebe Putney Health System also manages the Southwest Georgia Regional Medical Center, Georgia's first critical access hospital, in Cuthbert, Georgia. Phoebe Putney oversees the Southwest Georgia Family Medicine Residency and is the site for the Medical College of Georgia's first satellite clinical campus.

In 2008, Phoebe Putney Health System helped to rebuild and expand the Sumter hospital in Americus, Georgia, after it was destroyed by a tornado; Sumter Regional Hospital is now Phoebe Sumter Medical Center and is a diversified health care system, complete with Inpatient and Outpatient Diagnostic and Therapeutic Services, Outpatient Surgery Services, Hospice, Rural Health Care Centers, Migrant Health, School Nurse Program and numerous physician specialties and office practices.

Through Mr. Wernick's excellent guidance, Phoebe has been recognized nationally for excellence in clinical quality, operations and community health. In 2004, Phoebe was presented

the prestigious American Hospital Association's Foster G. McGaw Prize. Additionally, the health system became the first hospital recipient of a Discovery Health Channel Medical Honor. Phoebe also has won three Voluntary Hospitals of America (VHA) Leadership Awards and the American Hospital Association's Nova Award for an innovative teen pregnancy prevention program.

Mr. Wernick is a native of Arkansas and a proud Razorback, receiving his Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration from the University of Arkansas, and earned his Master's Degree in Hospital Administration from Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio.

He is married to Stacy Wernick, nee Paul. They have one daughter, Lilly Katherine. Besides his involvement with multiple local, state and national organizations, he takes time to teach as a member of the Georgia Southwestern MBA faculty. He has been a Rotarian since 1982, and is a Paul Harris Fellow.

Mr. Wernick is a Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives and is director of the VHA. He is also on the board of VHA-Georgia, the Georgia Alliance of Community Hospitals, and he is Chairman of the Medical Resource Network, a statewide managed care network. Mr. Wernick is actively involved in many local civic and economic development initiatives. He currently chairs the Southwest Georgia Alliance for Progress, a regional coalition to strengthen economic, educational and cultural infrastructures.

Madame Speaker, Joel Wernick has greatly contributed to the lives of those in his community and across the State of Georgia through his leadership of Phoebe Putney. This year, he has been recognized by Georgia Trend magazine for his significant contributions, having been named one of the state's top 25 leaders. According to Georgia Trend, he "has guided the hospital to a period of historic growth in staff, revenues and new services, and has expanded the facility's presence in vastly underserved areas in Southwest Georgia." For his dedication to our region, I wish to commend and congratulate an outstanding leader and my friend, Mr. Joel Wernick, on this significant accomplishment.